1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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portance is being considered, particularly where the buying or selling of some land is involved, all the members of a habitation may be consulted and the opinion of the oldest man in the family, the "family head," is almost invariably followed. At the death of a man his widow inherits all his property for the duration of her lifetime or until she remarries. Her children by her dead husband, if minors, do not receive their inheritance at once, but the elders of the habitation of their father hold this property in trust for them and act as their guardians. The deities of the *vodun* cult are believed to be inherited in family lines, a tradition that gives the larger family one of its most pronouncedly African traits; while the accompanying African belief in the inheritance of the soul within the family, despite its existence in Mirebalais principally as a survival, is yet of importance in adding its sanction to help maintain the inner cohesion of the group.[2]

It may be well at this point to investigate the position, duties, and powers of the oldest male member of the group, who is the head of this informal extended family.[3] His house must be in the ancestral habitation, though he need not live in the same dwelling as his predecessor. Just as he is consulted on projects of a secular nature, his is the important voice in the worship of the ancestors and the family gods. He does not carry on the actual routine of the cult unless he is a priest, but no ceremony would be attempted without his consent and full instructions from him, and the call for the rite would be made in his name.

Examples of the exercise of his power in various circumstances are given. "He may threaten: 'Very well. If you will not listen, I am through. Do what you like.'" In such a case he will refuse "to extend his hand" when a member of his family meets some difficulty, and a man thus punished forfeits the outstanding economic advantage of belonging to his relationship group, the right to call on the members of his family for aid when he is in trouble. For otherwise all relatives